

VZCZCXYZ0010
PP RUEHWEB

DE RUEHSK #0132/01 0390939
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 080939Z FEB 06
FM AMEMBASSY MINSK
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3730
INFO RUEHKV/AMEMBASSY KIEV PRIORITY 3115
RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PRIORITY 3306
RUEHRA/AMEMBASSY RIGA PRIORITY 1543
RUEHVL/AMEMBASSY VILNIUS PRIORITY 3526
RUEHWR/AMEMBASSY WARSAW PRIORITY 3186
RHMFISS/HQ USEUCOM VAIHINGEN GE PRIORITY
RUEHVEN/USMISSION USOSCE PRIORITY 0851
RUFOADA/JAC MOLESWORTH RAF MOLESWORTH UK PRIORITY
RUEHBS/USMISSION USEU PRIORITY 0037

C O N F I D E N T I A L MINSK 000132

SIPDIS

KIEV FOR USAID
SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/05/2016
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [BO](#)
SUBJECT: PARTNERSHIP ANONYMOUSLY REPORTS FIRST ELECTION
OBSERVATIONS

REF: A. A) 05 MINSK 1437
[B. B\) MINSK 0009](#)
[C. C\) MINSK 0114](#)

Classified By: CLASSIFIED BY AMBASSADOR GEORGE KROL FOR REASONS
1.4 (B,D)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: Despite potentially facing criminal charges for reporting any information that may discredit Belarus, civil initiative Partnership anonymously sent via email a report detailing the results of the first phase of its long-term election observation. The report, which covers January 1-20, describes specific incidents of GOB pressure on nomination signature collectors and irregularities in the formulation of territorial commissions in addition to reporting on the general election process and the relative amount of coverage candidates receive in the mass media. End Summary.

[1](#)2. (C) Despite recent amendments to the criminal code that make it prohibitively dangerous to report any information that may discredit Belarus (ref A), civil initiative Partnership anonymously emailed its first report covering January 1-20 election observations to its newsletter subscribers. (Note: On January 4, Partnership director Nikolay Astreiko informed Emboffs that four detailed reports on election observations from January until March would be a main component of Partnership's long term observation plan (ref B). Astreiko told Emboffs he hopes the independent media will pick up the reports and distribute the information in them as widely as possible.)

What Did Partnership See? Some Specifics from the Report

[1](#)3. (C) Partnership reported generally on the large amount of airtime that Lukashenko received on state media as compared to the opposition candidates, government suppression of independent media, and violations and irregularities in commission formulation and signature collection. While most of what Partnership reported was covered in independent media sources and human rights groups, Partnership's report offered several new specific insights on the violations in the election campaign.

[1](#)4. (C) In the report, Partnership stated that out of the 2,124 members of the 165 recently created territorial commissions, only one commissioner is from a party (the

Belarus Popular Front) that supports the 10 Coalition candidate Aleksandr Milinkevich. The report further stated that GOB never made public the complete list of commissioners, where the commissioners worked, or the process by which they were nominated to the commissions.

15. (C) The report also contained specific examples of the pressure the GOB placed on initiative group members during the signature collection process. According to the report, members of Milinkevich's and Poznyak's initiative groups were detained by police and administratively punished by the courts for collecting signatures in Minsk and Pinsk. The report described situations where university officials denied initiative group members access to student dormitories and pressured students to sign nomination forms in support for President Lukashenko.

Comment

16. (C) Even though the report did not indicate its author and was sent out from an email address not connected with the civil initiative, the document was easily identified as the work of Partnership, which is the largest and most organized domestic observation group in Belarus. The report, however, was not posted on Partnership's website as originally promised to Emborffs by Astreiko, perhaps due to the fear of punishment under the amendments to the Criminal Code for spreading "false" information about Belarus. Post notes the quality and detail in this report is well below that of Partnership's 2004 election coverage, likely because of GOB pressures and threats to activists. Regardless, Partnership, along with international observers (ref C) will play an important role in highlighting the many examples of election fraud the GOB will most certainly use to ensure a Lukashenko victory.

Krol